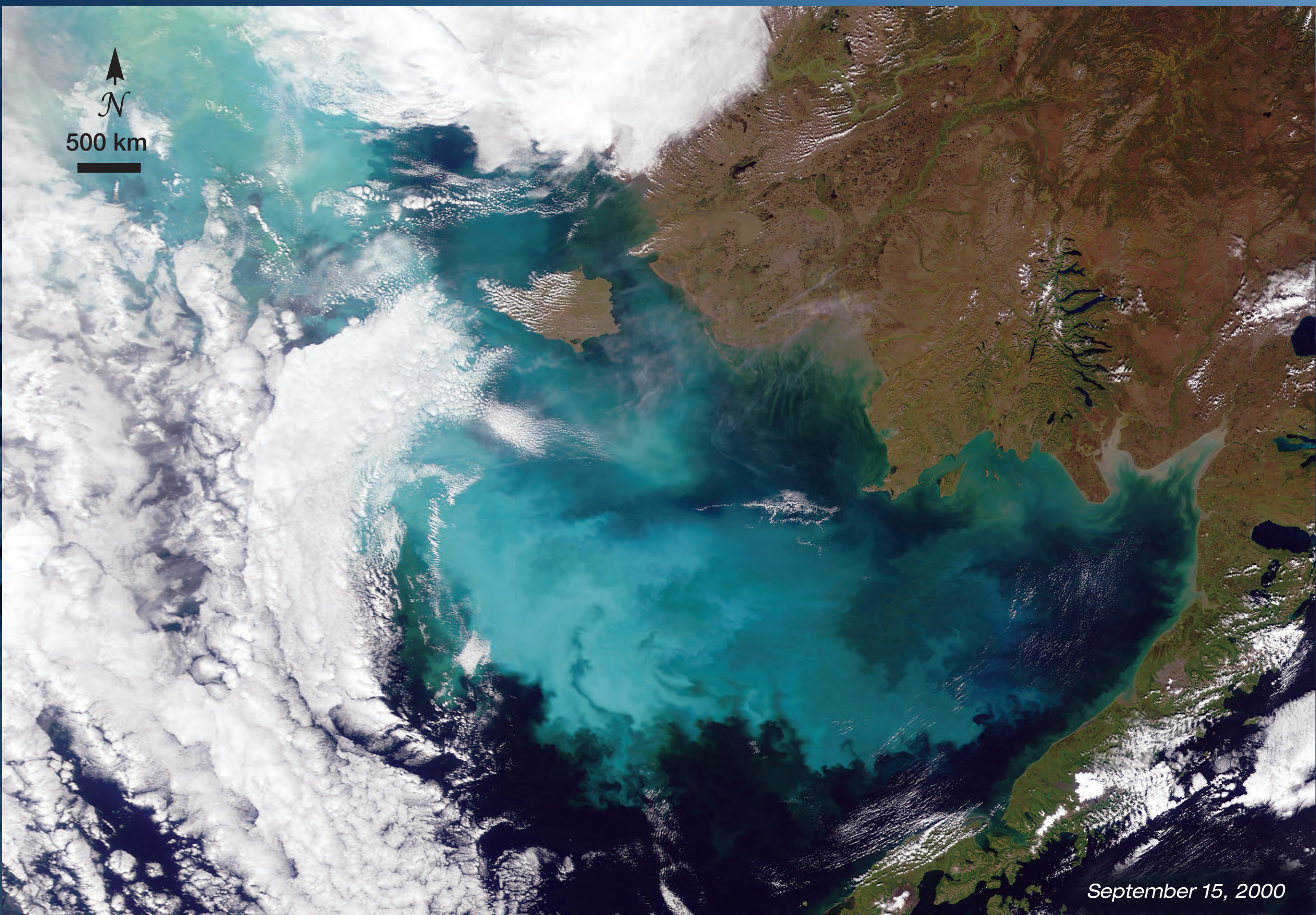




Coccolithophores and the “Sea of Milk”

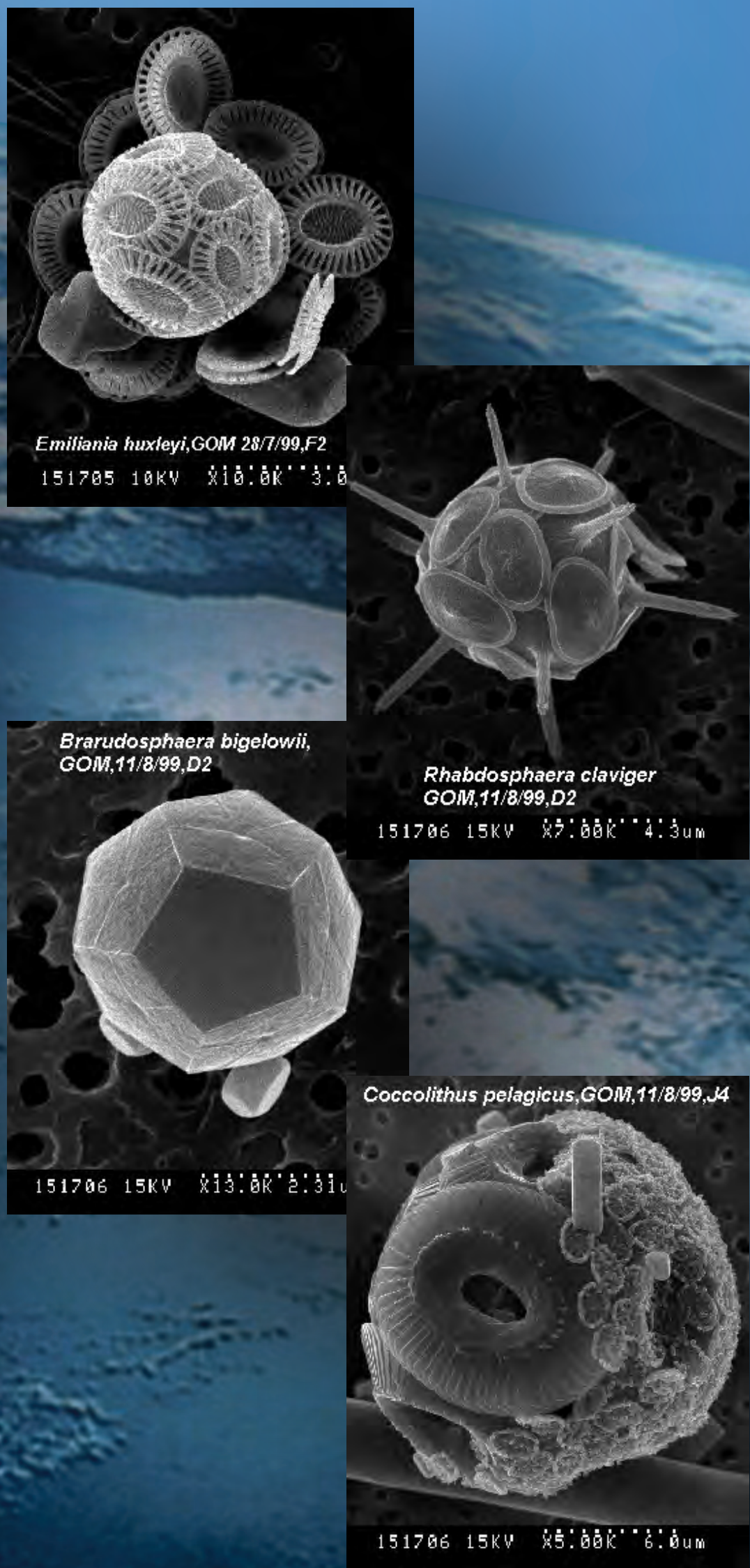


This ‘Sea of Milk’ in the western English Channel is actually a bloom of millions of microscopic organisms called coccolithophores. Image collected by Landsat 7.



SeaWiFS images, such as the one shown above, recorded the return of the turquoise waters characteristic of coccolithophore blooms to the Bering Sea.

- Coccolithophores are microscopic marine organisms covered with white limestone scales.
- Ubiquitous in the world's oceans.
- In high concentrations, can form spectacularly bright, milky or turquoise-colored waters.
- Responsible for the formation of the White Cliffs of Dover in England.
- Described as early as the 1870s in Jules Verne's book, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*.



Scanning Electron Micrographs courtesy of Dr. Delors Blasco, Institute de Ciencias del Mar, Barcelona, Spain

NPP

npoes preparatory project